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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Fallujah to Replace Septic Tanks with New Waste Water Treatment Plant

By Norris Jones
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FALLUJAH, Iraq – Involving hundreds of Iraqis in its work force, a new sewer system is taking shape in Fallujah.

It's the biggest construction project the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers oversees in Al Anbar Province of Iraq.

Fallujah's new facility will use the construction of pump stations trunk mains and a treatment plant to serve as the backbone for a city-wide system. This is the initial phase that will eventually connect every home in the city.

"That community has been relying on septic tanks and the raw sewage is making its way onto the streets and into the storm sewers going directly to the Euphrates River," explains Michael Jakubiak, part of a team of USACE engineers involved with the project. "So you have residents downstream that are taking their drinking water from that contaminated source. This project will improve that situation."

Iraqi workers place concrete for a small clarifier tank for a waster water treatment plant as part of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project to rebuild the Fallujah sewer system. (USACE photo by Travis Edwards)

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Jakubiak says his office meets with the various construction firms for some 13 separate contracts, city and Iraqi ministry officials on a regular basis to ensure issues are resolved and the project moves forward. "It's those city and ministry officials who will eventually take over operation and maintenance of the new sewer system and we want to make sure it meets their standards. They're fully engaged and eager to see this project completed."

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Regarding the contractors, he pointed out, "we're doing a lot of work to mentor them especially in the areas of quality control and safety. Those are two key factors we continue to emphasize."

With the new system, two large pump stations will each have the capacity to handle 150,000 cubic meters daily. Fallujah's sewage will be sent to inlet tanks at the waste water treatment facility, then aerated grit and oil removal tanks, onto 65-meter-wide aeration tanks, then set-

Form work holds the clarifier tanks in place before concrete is placed over the rebar at the Fallujah waster water treatment plant. (USACE photo by Travis Edwards)

tling tanks, and lastly with the last step being a chlorination contact chamber before being released to the Euphrates River.

"There's no question the health of Fallujah's residents will be benefited by this project. Our mission is to help the Iraqi people get back on their feet and I'm proud to be part of this effort," said Jakubiak. He had been involved with sewer-related projects in Cary, North Carolina, prior to volunteering for a year's duty in Iraq.

"This is a great assignment. We're helping a community with real needs," he said. "The local jobs created are a boon to Fallujah's economy. Those workers know they're making a difference."

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